

September 20, 2004

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Pursuant to the Administrative Rules of Montana, 17.4.609, the following Environmental Assessment has been prepared by the Department of Environmental Quality concerning Susan & John Knudson \ dba \ Valley Towing & Salvage a motor vehicle wrecking facility.

The purpose of the Environmental Assessment is to inform all interested governmental agencies, public groups or individuals of the proposed action and to determine whether or not the action may have a significant effect on the human environment. This Environmental Assessment will be circulated for a period of thirty **(30) days** at which time a decision will be made as to our future action.

If you care to comment on this proposed action, please do so within the allotted time.

Sincerely,

Bruce W. Meyer
Motor Vehicle Recycling & Disposal Program
(406) 444-2835 or e-mail at brmeyer@state.mt.us

Enc.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
P.O. Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620-0901
(406) 444-4400

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

Division/Bureau: Permitting & Compliance \ Motor Vehicle Recycling and Disposal Program

Project or Application: Susan and John Knudson, Valley Towing & Salvage, Plains, MT - A proposed private auto wrecking facility.

Description of Project: Susan and John Knudson \ dba \ Valley Towing & Salvage located at 638 Upper Lynch Creek, Plains, Montana, has submitted a motor vehicle wrecking facility license application to this department for review. The proposed motor vehicle wrecking facility will be in Sanders County. The legal description of the facility is Section 25, Township 21 North, and Range 26 West. To be more specific it is located in Clark Creek Ranchettes tract 24. The facility is approximately 10 acres in size. This site was formerly a licensed Motor Vehicle Wrecking facility.

Benefits and Purpose of Proposal: Susan and John Knudson are proposing to establish a motor vehicle wrecking facility just north of Plains, MT. As required by the Motor Vehicle Recycling and Disposal Act, all wrecking facilities must be shielded from public view. "Public view" is defined as any point six (6) feet above the surface of the center of a public road from which the junk vehicles can be seen. By obtaining a motor vehicle wrecking facility license, Susan and John Knudson would be allowed to: (1) Buy, sell, or deal in four or more vehicles per year of a type required to be licensed, for the purpose of wrecking, dismantling, disassembling, or substantially altering the form of the motor vehicle, (2) Buy or sell component parts, in whole or in part, and deal in second-hand junk vehicles, and (3) Purchase wrecked vehicles from insurance companies. Insurance companies are required by state law to sell junk vehicles only to licensed motor vehicle wrecking facilities. This business would provide a commercial source of automotive parts which would provide a cost saving to the consumer and would conserve energy and natural resources otherwise used to manufacture new parts.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider:

Alternative #1. Not to establish and license a facility at this location. This would limit public access to used automotive parts.

Alternative #2. To establish and license a facility at a location other than the one proposed in the license application. This would require the applicant to find and acquire by purchase or lease a different parcel of property for the proposed usage.

Alternative #3. To establish and license a facility at the proposed location.

A listing and appropriate evaluation of mitigation, stipulations and other controls enforceable by the agency or another government agency: Automotive fluids must be drained from the vehicles prior to the vehicle being placed in storage. All fluids removed from the vehicles must be captured over an impermeable surface, properly containerized, and properly stored for reuse, recycling, or proper disposal. This is a management method intended to alleviate the potential for groundwater contamination. This is a license condition enforceable by the agency.

CFCs (Freon) must not be released to the environment. This is a federally enforceable requirement and is enforced by the U.S. EPA.

Recommendation: N/A

If an EIS is needed, and if appropriate, explain the reasons for preparing the EA: N/A

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is an appropriate level of analysis: Based on the information submitted for review with the license application, it is the preliminary determination of the department that an Environmental Assessment (EA) will provide an adequate review for this proposal.

Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have overlapping jurisdiction: Sanders County Commissioners.

Individuals or groups contributing to this EA: Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service; Montana Historical Society, and State Historic Preservation Office.

EA prepared by Bruce W. Meyer

Date: September 22, 2004

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

	Maj	Mod	Min	None	Unkn	Att
1. Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitat			xxx			xxx
2. Water Quality, Quantity, and Distribution			xxx			xxx
3. Geology and Soil Quality, Stability and Moisture			xxx			xxx
4. Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality			xxx			xxx
5. Aesthetics				xxx		xxx
6. Air Quality				xxx		
7. Unique, Endangered, Fragile or Limited Environmental Resources				xxx		
8. Demands on Environmental Resources of Water, Air, and Energy				xxx		
9. Historical and Archaeological Sites				xxx		xxx

*Maj = Major; Mod = Moderate; Min = Minor; Unkn = Unknown; Att = Attached

CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS: The impacts listed as minor in the table above will be minor to none, because of the intended management practices.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

	Maj	Mod	Min	None	Unkn	Att
1. Social Structure and Mores				xxx		
2. Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity				xxx		
3. Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue			xxx			xxx
4. Agricultural or Industrial Production				xxx		
5. Human Health				xxx		
6. Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities				xxx		
7. Quantity and Distribution of Employment			xxx			xxx
8. Distribution of Population				xxx		
9. Demands for Government Services			xxx			xxx
10. Industrial and Commercial Activities				xxx		
11. Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals				xxx		xxx

*Maj = Major; Mod = Moderate; Min = Minor; Unkn = Unknown; Att = Attached

CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS: The impacts will be minor for local and state tax base and tax revenue due to the size of the facility. The quantity and distribution of employment will be minor to none because of the number employed. The demands for government services will be minor to none and will be covered by county staff and state staff.

SUSAN AND JOHN KNUDSON - ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

General Comments

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality licenses and regulates motor vehicle wrecking facilities under the authority of the Motor Vehicle Recycling & Disposal Act (75-10-501, MCA) and Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM 17.50.201).

To be eligible for licensing, a proposed wrecking facility must:

- 1) Be in compliance with all existing zoning ordinances on the date the license application is submitted to the department.
- 2) Be capable of being shielded from view of any existing public road. If the license application is approved, the applicant must construct all necessary shielding prior to the commencement of operations at the facility.
- 3) Not create any adverse environmental impacts.

The department has made the preliminary determination that the applicant is in compliance with the existing zoning ordinances as of the date of the submittal of the application and can effectively shield the proposed facility from all public roads in the area. The purpose of the Environmental Assessment is to determine if the proposed motor vehicle wrecking facility can be established without posing significant adverse environmental impacts. This site was formerly a licensed Motor Vehicle Wrecking facility.

Potential Impacts on Physical Environment

1. Terrestrial & aquatic life habitats
4. Vegetation cover, quantity and quality

The proposed site of the wrecking facility is approximately 10 acres in size. This facility will be located just north of Plains, MT. The legal description of the facility is Section 25, Township 21 North, and Range 26 West. To be more specific it is located in Clark Creek Ranchettes tract 24. The facility is approximately 10 acres in size.

Other residential parcels of ground north of Plains will surround this wrecking facility. Most of the surrounding area would serve as habitat for birds, small mammals and mule deer.

The establishment of a motor vehicle wrecking facility should not disturb and displace any of the vegetation and wildlife habitat within the proposed location. The impacts caused by the wrecking facility should not be significant to the area's ecosystem.

2. Water quality, quantity, and distribution

There are several wells in the area of where the wrecking facility will be located. The static water level in these wells range from 10', 11', 14', 36', and 90'. This information was obtained from the Ground Water Information Center. Some of the adjoining properties have a relatively shallow aquifer, which gives rise to several springs, for their main use.

All fluids removed from the vehicles must be captured over an impermeable surface, properly containerized, and properly stored for reuse, recycling, or proper disposal. The applicant is proposing to place automotive fluids in separate containers and will recycle those fluids on a timely basis.

This proposal is reasonably expected to not have any impacts on the quality, quantity, and distribution of the ground water with the above management practices in place.

3. Geology and soil quality, stability, and moisture

The soils in the vicinity of the site are classified by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service as 55DX series. This is a very deep (0-60 inches) gravelly loam soil characterized by an increase in clay content with depth from the ground surface. Moderate permeability and medium surface runoff are features also typical of this sub series. The primary limitations of 55DX are the potential for surface erosion by water, and dustiness

for road construction. These soils are used mainly for woodland, understory grazing, and wildlife habitat.

Waste anti-freeze, gasoline, and lubricating oils contain petroleum distillates, heavy metals, and possibly toxic compounds. If improperly disposed of, these fluids can cause surface and groundwater degradation. The applicant proposes to properly recycle all of the above-named automotive fluids. Some residual lubricating oils and anti-freeze may drip from the vehicles stored at the facility. This residual dripping is not expected to cause any surface or groundwater degradation.

5. Aesthetics

The applicant proposes to use wooden fencing to shield the junk vehicles from public view on the north, east, and south sides. An onsite evaluation by department personnel determined that the shielding would be adequate to meet the requirements of the Motor Vehicle Recycling & Disposal Act.

"Public view" is defined as any point six (6) feet above the surface of the center of a public road from which the junk vehicles can be seen.

9. Historical and archaeological sites

The State Historic Preservation Office conducted a cultural resource file search for this property. Based on the State Historic Preservation Office file search, "Currently, no historical or archaeological sites are recorded with in the designated search area. This may reflect a lack of prior survey rather than a known absence of cultural resources in the project area. According to records currently available to us, there have been no professional cultural resource surveys in this project area."

Potential Impacts on Human Environment

3. Local & state tax base & tax revenue

7. Quantity and distribution of employment

The establishment of the proposed motor vehicle wrecking facility may provide a source of used motor vehicles or component parts for sale to the public. The issuance of a motor vehicle wrecking facility license will allow the applicant to: (1) Buy, sell, or deal in four or more vehicles per year of a type required to be licensed for the purpose of wrecking, dismantling, disassembling, or substantially altering the form of the motor vehicle, (2) Buy or sell component parts, in whole or in part, and deal in second-hand motor vehicle parts, and (3) Purchase wrecked vehicles from insurance companies. Insurance companies are required by state law to sell junk vehicles only to licensed motor vehicle wrecking yards.

The establishment of a motor vehicle wrecking facility may create an additional labor requirement and may result in additional employment. This employment and the employment requirements for the support services of this yard may provide a neutral to positive employment impact for the community.

9. Demands for governmental services

The issuance of a motor vehicle wrecking facility license will require administrative and inspection services of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the Sanders County Junk Vehicle Program personnel.

11. Locally adopted environmental plans and goals

The establishment of a motor vehicle wrecking facility at this location does not conflict with any existing zoning ordinances as certified by Daniel Miles, Director Land Services, Sanders County, Thompson Falls, MT.

Effect on Adjoining Landowners and Land Uses
Other Site-Specific Information

Information gathered for the preparation of this Environmental Assessment reveals that directly adjacent to the proposed location are tracts of land similar in size and residential use. The management practices of proper waste disposal and shielding the junk vehicles from public view will minimize any impacts to adjoining landowners and land uses.